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10-5-67

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I think you're going to have to write a book about that move. -What I've really tried to picture is how you got those geese moved. I had a German friend who once tried to move two race horses. One got loose and went galloping Lena all over the place pursued by what she kept referring to as "that fockin' dock". It took me quite a while to figure out that she was talking about a duck. And recently I helped a friend move: she had a big hunter and a flock of white ducks, Pekings, and two pet mallards. We rounded up the Pekings easily enough. But the horse refused to go in the trailer, snapped his rope and stood lowering and looking for greener pastures, while the mallards swooped over our heads. Finally I made a flying tackle and caught the drake up against the fence, the horse gave a big whinny and thundered into the trailer and she elapped the gate shut; or we'd be there yet. -Anyway, I'm glad you have a place like a movie. Kansas is not as pretty as Maryland, I know; but we have a very pretty place for here. About a thousand trees, a small meadow, a stream. Big sky.

I didn't really mean to make a play for sympathy. I was, and am puzzled, and out of habit I took my puzzle to you. So far I have not had an adverse reaction from the companies I represent; instead -and I should have anticipated it -I discover an enormous increase in my popularity with the state agents who are married only on weekends, it seems, and the rest of the time form a philandering poker playing clique to which the word drinkin' would appear to be the password. - And, as you suggest, I think I may have at last become a full-fledged character to the locals -a sort of black celebrity. They live vicariously anyway and how many of them have racked up while pursued by five police cars? Thunder was her engine and white lightnin' was her load. -But all this fails to cheer me up. It ain't just: if you have the name you ought to have the game, and I didn't get the game. There is not one bit of information about it recorded on my brain.

b.t.

The Moorman Photograph

As you can see, Little D is quite clear on the ~~left~~ right hand side, as compared to the much larger version published in the Oct. 5, 1964, Newsweek.

This is mystifying. Little D would have been made from the original Polaroid, quite small, then enlarged, printed on newsprint, rephotographed, and then reduced to a size much smaller than the original Polaroid for printing in the Commission exhibit. Thus this tiny reproduction of a newspaper print one third the size of a newspaper page is far superior in clarity to the much larger print received and printed by Newsweek one year later.

I do not know what could account for the deterioration depicted in the right side of this picture.

The Newsweek version, with its radical deterioration, is typical of the adventures of the Moorman photograph. All later versions are inferior, specifically on the right hand side, in which I am interested, to the first print which occurred Nov. 24, 1963, in the Dallas Times Herald.

In the Dallas Times Herald version you can plainly see the outline of the motorcycle windshields and the chin line of the left trunk riding officer, showing that he is looking directly at the President. In all other versions you cannot see the windshields except as white glare. The chin line of the officer has disappeared into the overall glare and he appears to be looking at the knoll.

Obviously, this picture began its misadventures when the Dallas police held it, and Mrs. Hill and Miss Moorman, for several hours on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963. It was probably originally smeared at that time. Later someone did a better job of it.

Also, the right hand side defect in this picture is not typical of Polaroid shots. You don't get that in my experience. The officer and the cycle windshields being closest to Mrs. Moorman should have shown up with the greatest clarity of anything in the picture. She would have been 8 or 10 feet from them, from the looks of it, and they would have registered best as that is the proper distance for taking a Polaroid close up, in my experience.

This picture is always shown cropped. The right trunk riding officer was also in the original picture. You never get the full picture in a clear version; I have only seen it once or twice in early unclear versions.

You will find this same mysterious inability to prove me wrong in all shots that show what is shown in the extreme right hand of this picture. It ought to be easy; but you can't do it except in the Altgens photograph, the "official one". The unofficial version which Parallax, etc., used indicates I am right. It would be a million to one chance that a picture could be accidentally reprinted showing two alterations

" The Reconstruction photos "

I also wanted to point out to you something about the reconstruction photos. You will notice that those taken on ~~Elm~~ Houston Street show a rider on the right rear trunk. Suddenly on Elm Street this rider falls so far behind he does not appear in the pictures at all at the crucial time. I think there is a very simple reason for this: they couldn't lay the crosshairs on the Kennedy stand-in without getting such a rider in the picture from the sixth floor window. And this would mean that from almost any point to the right rear below the sixth floor, they couldn't lay the crosshairs on the Kennedy stand in without laying them on this man. Kennedy was protected from the right rear by this rider and anyone behind him, on the right rear.

The same would go for ~~the~~^a right rear wound to Connally. Connally would be covered by this man.

And it goes for the Dal Tex building too, which was to the right rear when the car is in the assassination position.

Also, to anyone in the TSBD or the Dal Tex bldg., Kennedy's head would simply be one among many. There was the escort and the ten men in the follow up car, some of them standing up or sitting on the top of the car. They had to pick out that one head. Thus the reconstruction photos are entirely deceptive. That isn't the way it was that day. There were many heads, Kennedy may have been almost entirely protected by the cycle escort, and the standing men, or high-sitting men in the follow up car. -But the reconstruction photos lay him out there empty of protection. And especially is the scene denuded of this right trunk rider, who offered him the most protection from the right rear. He is deliberately dropped from the pictures taken on Elm Street.

in just the two places I would expect them.

I do not of course claim that there are two different versions of the Moorman picture. There is just this mystifying deterioration to the point of ~~inint~~ unintelligibility in different reprints of it.

No other assassination photograph has displayed this mystifying deterioration. At least I know of none.

As I have said before, you can't ever prove anything from what is in the background of a picture. It is what is in the foreground that is most likely to be faked, or missing. Or to suffer deterioration. From the background you can only get ideas, you can only speculate. Therefore, I still think that it is likely that the Betzner pictures came up missing because he took a picture of what he saw (a nickel-plated revolver in the hands of someone in the street) rather than because one of them shows something in the background.

(I do not think the Moorman picture shows any great indication of a headsnap either. The hair appears to be blown forward and leftward.)

--I do need to correct what I said above that you can't prove anything from the background: to this extent: something like the puff of smoke drifting away, which you say Mr. Sprague has discovered in some films, is proof. But it is not proof that a rifle was fired. It sounds much more like a firecracker was thrown out. That would account for a filmable puff of smoke. No good rifle would throw enough smoke to be filmed from that distance in my estimation.

I doubt very much if any of those pictures will show back up men catching cartridges. These assassins didn't stand around playing catch all over the place that day. What we do know is that one unidentified witness saw someone throw something into the bushes. You don't mistake a catch for a throw. Add to this that about 75 percent of the witnesses including the agents in the follow up car thought they heard firecrackers. That Holland thought originally that the puff of smoke came from a firecracker. That Agent Taylor saw a firecracker or streamer fly by during the shooting. That Senator Yarborough smelled gunpowder all the way to the hospital. And you get firecrackers. Not rifles. Mrs. Cabell, Tom Dillard smelled gunsmoke as they rounded that corner. Gunsmoke at street level. There is no conceivable way that shots fired from The Dal Tex bldg., the knoll, or the TSBD could have concentrated a heavy smell of gunpowder at street level on that corner, especially on a windy day like that. You may also recall that Constable Weitzman testified that one witness brought him a firecracker part that later the Lab said was a piece of skull. Now that is preposterous. One is wet and bone. The other is dry and cardboard. Whose word would you take, the witness or the Dallas police lab? According to Weitzman, the Dallas cops immediately fanned out in search of firecracker parts..

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And that of course is the significance of the painted out crossbar in the Altgens picture on the hood of the Johnson car. Without the crossbar it might pass for a glare off a windshield wiper. With the crossbar, it looks like an object. With the crossbar removed, as we know it has been, it looks like somebody had exactly the same idea I do: that that was one of those firecracker streamers thrown out to cover real shots from elsewhere. And that's why Sen. Y. smelled gunpowder all the way to the hospital: debris dropped into and on the Johnson car from a firecracker which exploded in the air above it.